ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0072]   A forward error correction system comprises a forward error correction (FEC) manager and a transmitter. The FEC manager is configured to receive a data stream and to define a plurality of FEC code words based on the data stream. Each of the FEC code words comprises a data portion and a checksum portion that may be used to recover at least one character of the data portion. The FEC manager is configured to interleave characters of the FEC code words such that the FEC code words are transmitted, by the transmitter, to a remote receiver in an interleaved fashion. The FEC manager is configured to provide characters from each of the FEC code words to the transmitter before a plurality of characters to be assigned to each of the FEC code words has been received by the FEC manager.